

Minutes of Courthouse Grounds & Facilities Committee

May 28th, 2013

Present: Armstrong, Fox, Lorrig, Mileo, Saia, Schoonmaker

Absent: Curtis, Liggett, Payne, Phillips,

Staff present:

Alice Alkire, Assistant to the Circuit Court Judges

Chris Kenney, County Arborist

Lieutenant Perry McCartney, LCSO, Courts Security Division

Mimi Greene, Staff Liaison to the Committee

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Jeremiah Lorrig, Chair.

Approval of April minutes:

Motion: Jeremiah

Second: John M.

For: 6

Against: 0

New Business:

1. Bluemont Concert Series – Application for use of Grounds

Bob Sevila introduced himself as a member of the Board of Directors of the Bluemont Concert Series (BCS). He, in turn, introduced Milt Herd, Chairman of the Board and Lily Dunning, Executive Director.

Mr. Herd thanked the Committee for allowing BCS to return to the Courthouse Grounds for the 2012 summer concert season after a hiatus of several years. He pointed out that the concerts were family- oriented and reiterated that BCS followed all protocols for clean-up of the Grounds.

Lily Dunning thanked the Committee for allowing BCS to return to the Grounds and thanked them for considering the application for 2013.

Jeremiah asked if the music at the concerts was amplified.

John M. asked if it was necessary to amplify the music.

Ms. Dunning said that the performers used a mixture of instruments, some acoustical, some electric. She stated that BCS would like permission to use the County's electricity for the amplifiers.

John M. asked Mimi and Alice if it was indeed a County policy that the electricity could not be used and they both answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Sevila said that BCS was willing to comply with County policy but said he may pursue obtaining permission to use the electricity at a higher level.

Jeremiah asked how many people routinely attended the concerts and Mr. Herd stated that the number varied. Ms. Dunning said the figure was usually 200+ and Mr. Sevila said the number of attendees usually depended on the weather and the featured performers.

Jeremiah asked how many concerts were planned and Mr. Sevila said five.

John M. asked about the timeframe of the concerts and Ms. Dunning said they ran from 7-10 pm on Sunday nights.

Jeremiah recalled that restoration work was planned for the front steps of the Old Courthouse (OCH) and asked Alice if that was on schedule. Alice said that General Services planned to begin the work soon and that a staging area had already been erected. She said the project would take at least a month to complete and would include replacing the disintegrating knee walls.

Mr. Herd suggested that a stage could be set up in front of the steps and Alice said she didn't know how far the fence around the project would extend onto the lawn. Jeremiah said he thought a stage would be an eyesore and Mr. Herd said it could be put up and taken down for each concert.

Curt stated that he wanted to approve the application and said he was a faithful attendee of the concerts. He asked if the porch in front of the main entrance to the Courts Complex (18 E. Market St.) could be used.

Alice asked Lt. McCartney for his thoughts on that idea. Lt. McCartney pointed out that there would not be as much room for the crowd as the flagpoles and monuments would be in the way.

Mr. Sevila suggested that this alternative might be a good thing. He stated that the BCS started as the “Sunday Courthouse Series” and wanted to remain, if possible, at the Courthouse. They had been to other venues, such as Dodona Manor, but truly felt that the Courthouse venue was best.

Jeremiah asked how tied in the BCS was to the concert dates and Ms. Dunning answered that they were in the process of finalizing the dates. Mr. Sevila offered that they would be publishing the schedule soon.

Discussion ensued on how to “make it work” and schedule the concerts around the construction project. Curt and John M. wondered if the schedule could be pushed back. Mr. Sevila stated that the preferred method of cooperation would be to move to another location on the Grounds.

John S. wondered if the dates on the application could be amended and Jeremiah suggested changing them to 7/7 to 8/3. Ms. Dunning said those dates could be confirmed tomorrow (Wednesday, 5/29).

Both Gwen and Suzanne indicated their support for the BCS.

Motion: Jeremiah – Approve with caveat of moving back concert schedule by one week: 7/7 to 8/4

Second: Gwen

For: 6

Against: 0

John M. asked about clean-up after the concerts and Ms. Dunning stated that BCS staff and volunteers routinely take care of that.

John S. asked Chris Kenney about the impact of the concerts on the Grounds and Chris stated that any large event held on the Grounds in their current compromised condition was not good for them. Soil compaction around trees is an ongoing problem.

2. Discussion of Item #7 (Supervisor Clarke’s Board Member Initiative) from the 5/15/13 BOS meeting

Jeremiah asked the Committee members if they had attended the BOS meeting and John M. and John S. stated that they had and that both addressed the BOS during Public Comment.

John S. stated that he went into “full court press” in defense of the Committee and pointed out that the Committee helped the BOS by alleviating a sticky public issue (the holiday display). He thought it a coincidence that the display components chosen by the Committee were not those approved by Supervisor Clarke. He also told the BOS that only twice has the Committee failed to get a quorum at their meetings, due to illness and Spring Break vacations.

Curt asked the reason behind Supervisor Clarke’s initiative and Jeremiah stated that the basic intent was to cut down on unnecessary citizen committees that take up staff time. He explained that the full BOS voted to send the item to the Finance/Government Services & Operations Committee (FGSO) for further study and then back to the full BOS for a vote.

John M. thanked Mimi for bringing Item #7 to the Committee’s attention in time for members to attend the meeting and address the BOS. He told the group that Mimi had been asked by Supervisor Clarke’s staff (in December of 2012) to fill out a questionnaire regarding her duties as staff liaison and her feelings as to the effectiveness of the Committee. Her answers to each question were positive regarding the Committee. He explained that Item #7 divided the citizen committees into Groups A, B & C. The committees in Group A, (including this Committee) were recommended for elimination. He also said that, according to Supervisor Buona, the review process at the FGSO Committee level will be a slow and deliberate one.

John S. pointed out that Supervisor Clarke’s conclusions were not based on solid fact, as no financial analysis on cost of staff hours was done. John M. said that Supervisor Clarke did not count volunteer hours as cost avoidance.

Jeremiah said the group should focus on helping to clarify for the BOS what the Committee is doing and what it has accomplished. He asked that each member of the Committee reach out to their own Supervisor. He asked that Roy (as the longest serving member) help compile the Committee history and mission and that all members attend the FGSO meeting.

John S. suggested that everyone come up with bullet points for the presentation and Jeremiah agreed.

Old business:

1. Bollards – Plaza

Jeremiah asked the group what they thought of the choices they reviewed.

John M. had four questions: 1. What is the acceptable height? 2. Is there a budget? 3. What are the specs? 4. What is the color preference: black or yellow?

Discussion ensued on the desired size, weight, height and circumference of the bollards and how many of them needed to be removable.

Jeremiah suggested Jim Koenig be consulted again about specs and budget.

Curt asked why the bollards were needed if they are not there now and Alice said (Circuit Court Clerk) Gary Clemens had requested them.

Jeremiah suggested some agenda items for the June meeting: more information on bollards, and a proposal for the holiday display. He asked for other discussion or new business.

John M. pointed out that there was a typo on the new Civil War Trails marker. Alice said she had talked to Jeremy about it and he has called Steve Price, who is getting it corrected.

John S. said that he noticed that only the U.S. flag was on the Civil War Memorial, not the Confederate flag. Lt. McCartney said the “Flag Man” puts out the flags, not the County.

Jeremiah asked for a motion to adjourn:

Motion: – Suzanne

Second: – John M.

For: 6

Against: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mimi Greene
Staff Liaison

